

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A substitute specification is being filed in order to conform with U.S. practice. Headings have been added to the specification. Spelling and grammatical errors have also been corrected. The substitute specification contains no new matter. Amendments have been made to the claims and the abstract to conform with U.S. practice. An early action on the merits is respectfully requested.

If any additional fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

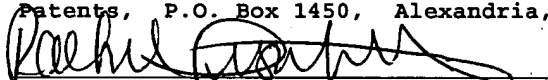
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on May 12, 2005.


Rachel Piscitelli

JC20 Rec'd PCT/PTO 12 MAY 2005

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION WITH MARKINGS

COMPENSATING SHAFT FOR RECIPROCATING PISTON ENGINES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a compensating shaft for reciprocating piston engines with at least one compensating weight with an eccentric center of gravity, the compensating weight being connected torsionally elastically to the compensating shaft. In modern internal combustion engines, compensating shafts are used to reduce vibrations and running noises. However, their effect and success is satisfactory only when the compensating shaft unit itself also runs in a quiet and vibration-free way.

[0002] Vibrations of the compensating shaft unit can be excited by the moving masses of the engine and by its rotational irregularity. The latter are, on account of the clearances in their drive and the small torque transmitted via it, a noise source which is particularly difficult to control; moreover, great load with a changing sign is exerted on the teeth by virtue of the rotational irregularity. Minimizing the tooth clearances is problematic on account of the temperature differences arising and increases manufacturing costs enormously.

[0003] It is known to provide the driving toothed wheel on the crankshaft of the engine with an elastic connection between the toothed ring and the wheel body, for instance from US 3,667,317, but this isolation from excitation by the crankshaft allows the masses of the entire compensating shaft unit the freedom to vibrate.

[0004] It is furthermore known from JP 2000-283238 AA to provide a torsionally elastic connection between a compensating weight and a bushing made as a hollow shaft. This connection consists of rubber, which is fitted between claws in the interior of the compensating weight and external claws of the bushing.

[0005] It is therefore an object of the invention to achieve effective noise reduction in a compensating shaft unit by torsionally elastic connection to the compensating shaft with minimum manufacturing costs (simple assembly included).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] According to the invention, ~~this~~ the foregoing object is achieved by virtue of the fact that the compensating weight surrounds the compensating shaft with its edge zones (as described in WO 01/29447 A1) and a window is formed therebetween in the longitudinal direction, in which an elastic element is provided, which is supported on the compensating shaft in the circumferential direction. The connection is thus soft in the circumferential direction and hard in the radial direction, which is desirable on account of the unbalance. In addition to the other advantages, the window moreover allows enough space for a spring damper unit or for an elastic element made of plastic. The latter makes it possible to produce a compensating weight with a closed cylindrical contour, which minimizes its splashing losses. The fact that only the compensating masses themselves vibrate freely affords a reduction of the tooth entry impacts on the

driving toothed wheels and quieter running.

[0007] In an especially good development, the elastic element is made of plastic of elasticity which is graduated in the circumferential direction, the hard central part having a connection to the compensating shaft which is firm in the circumferential direction. Above all, this brings about a progressive spring rate, which firstly allows free dying out but secondly limits the amplitude.

[0008] In an advantageous embodiment, the plastic part is manufactured by injection molding, the connection to the compensating shaft consisting of a co-injected root projecting into a transverse bore of the shaft. This makes simple manufacture and rapid mounting of the plastic part in the compensating weight possible. For this purpose, the root can comprise a metal reinforcement.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The invention is described and explained below with reference to diagrams, where

[0010] Fig. 1 shows a first embodiment in an axonometric view;

[0011] Fig. 2 shows a second embodiment in an axonometric view;

[0012] Fig. 3 shows a third embodiment in an axonometric view, and

[0013] Fig. 4 shows a section along A-A in Fig. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0014] In Fig. 1, a shaft is designated by 1 and a compensating weight by 2. The two together form a compensating shaft, which can also have more than one compensating weight 2. Here, the compensating weight 2 is of the type known from WO 01/29447, with two edge zones 3, which surround the shaft 1 like suspenders, and an eccentric unbalance mass 4. A window 6 is thus formed on that side of the shaft 1 facing away from the unbalance mass 4. However, the compensating weight could also be of any other shape, for instance a closed eccentric body. It is essential that the compensating weight 2 is fastened on the shaft 1 with an elastic bushing 5 interposed. Here, the elastic bushing 5 is in the form of a cylinder jacket, which is cut out in the window 6. It is made from a material which is elastic above all in the circumferential direction, preferably a rubber-like plastic. The connection between the elastic bushing 5 and the surface parts bearing against it of the shaft 1 and the compensating weight 2 can take place in the usual way by bonding or vulcanizing.

[0015] In Fig. 2, similar parts are provided with a reference number increased by ten. The compensating weight 12 with its edge zones 13 and its eccentric unbalance mass 14 again has a window 16 here, which is formed by the inner surfaces of the edge zones 13 and the delimiting surfaces of the eccentric unbalance mass 14. In this window, a featherkey-shaped stop 15 can be seen, which is part of the shaft 11 or is connected firmly to it. Arranged between this stop and the delimiting surface 17 is a

spring damper unit 18, illustrated only diagrammatically, which counteracts the relative rotation between the compensating weight 12 and the shaft 11 in one direction, a further such spring damper unit which acts in the other direction of rotation, also being present but not visible.

[0016] In Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, where the reference numbers are increased by twenty, the window designated by 16 in Fig. 2 is filled by an elastic element 25. This is made from a light material, preferably a plastic, and consists of a hard part 26, which extends over the entire axial length of the compensating weight 22, and soft parts 31 on both sides of the hard part. Hard and soft parts can be injection-molded together in one piece. For fastening the elastic element 25 on the shaft 21, the latter has a stepped transverse bore 30. The hard central part 26 of the elastic element 25 has a radially inwardly projecting root 27, which ends in a hook-shaped enlargement 28. During assembly of the compensating shaft, this root 27 is inserted into the transverse bore 30 until its hook snaps in in the enlargement of the transverse bore and is then fixed by means of a metal reinforcement 29. The soft part 31 of the elastic element 25 can be connected to the delimiting surface 32 of the unbalance mass. The elastic element 25 fills the window entirely, so that the compensating weight has a cylindrical outer contour. Furthermore, the directional arrow 33 on both sides in Fig. 4 indicates that the eccentric unbalance part 24 with the edge zones 23 can rotate out of the position shown in both directions in relation to the

shaft 21.

[0017] The damping elastic part, whether it is a spring damper unit 18 or an elastic element 25, is constructed in such a way that it allows rotation of the unbalance mass by up to ten angular degrees in both directions in relation to its illustrated position. If this maximum amplitude is reached, the hard part 26 of the elastic element 25 becomes active and prevents further rotation. However, such large rotations take place only during abrupt changes in rotational speed, whereas the very rapid small changes in rotational speed caused by the rotational irregularity of the engine are taken up completely, and the compensating weight rotates at an entirely constant rotational speed.

[0018] It is noteworthy that even a rotation of the compensating weight by the full amplitude of ten angular degrees results in only a brief reduction in the compensating effect of no more than 1½%.

[0019] All in all, thanks to the arrangement according to the invention, the tolerances both of the teeth of the driving toothed wheels and also of other parts can be made less close and the loading of the toothed wheels or chain wheels driving the compensating shaft is reduced considerably. A marked increase in quiet running is nevertheless achieved.